

has increased the number of referrals received by the spiritual care department and is yet another opportunity for dialogue.

Physicians are invited to pastoral care staff meetings to speak about their specialties and to suggest how chaplains may become more involved in the care of patients. Physicians are invited to discuss spiritual issues that patients are facing.

Chaplains were asked to design an individual strategy for soliciting more referrals from the physicians with whom they work. Strategies include calling all physicians

in a particular service to discuss referrals, as well as posing specific questions about a particular patient and asking how to be more involved in their spiritual care.

These are some opportunities for partnership with chaplains. Chaplains are a valuable resource in discussions about health care decisions, especially when they have already been involved in the care of a particular patient and family. Chaplains may be allies to support the physician or, at times, advocates for patients who are unable to be heard. Spiritual care brings an invaluable perspective to issues of life and death.

* * *

WISH

I wish I had a waiting room of Georgian women eating yogurt,
ageless Aborigines, the Mabaans of Sudan, the eldest matriarch
of which can hear a thrush at half a mile,

and that, one by one, they would step from the pages
of *National Geographic* to keep their ninetieth annual
routine check-up.

I want to counsel the most ancient Lama of Tibet,
believer of dream time and diets of fish,
"Keep doing whatever it is you do."

But long ago Chauncey Eberhardt, Odell Lamont,
and a tribe of Robert Popes of this world
had drawn me back to reality time.

Odell believes in grizzle and salt.
Chauncey has championed the yet unfilled prescription.
Ten years his junior, in spandex and heels, Mrs. Pope
confesses by proxy, within the flimsy hallway panels,
"While wearing his oxygen, Robert smokes."

I've learned of the strangest rituals and customs
of the tribe of the Robert Popes, how senior statesman Lamont
rules his kingdom with fork and spoon.

No wonder I listen for zebra hooves in between answering calls.
No wonder I imagine my fantasy patient:
an Aboriginal octogenarian, returned from hunting kangaroo,
offers his painted boomerang to partially pay his deductible.

PHILLIP J. COZZI, MD[©]
Brookfield, Illinois